

THE
BISHOP OF LLANDAFF'S THOUGHTS
ON THE
FRENCH INVASION,
ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED TO THE
CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE*.

AT no period since I have been your Diocesan have I interfered with your political opinions, or shewn the least anxiety to direct them to the support of any particular party in the state. Had I followed a contrary conduct, I should have acted in a manner unbecoming the nature of my office; ill suited to the character I wish to maintain; and disrespectful to yourselves. I have unquestionably my political principles, as well as other men have theirs: and, how unfashionable soever they may have become, I have never scrupled, and never shall scruple, to confess that those on which the Revolution was founded, and the present reigning Family seated on the Throne of these kingdoms, are, in my judgment, principles best calculated to protect the liberty and property of the subject, and to secure the honour and happiness of the Sovereign.

You will not, I think, be guilty of a breach of Christian Charity in the use of even harsh language, when you explain to them the cruelties which the French have used in every country they have invaded; for no language can reach the atrocity of the fact. They every where promise protection to the poorer sort, and they every where strip the poorest of every thing they possess; they plunder their cottages, and they set them on fire when the plunder is exhausted; they torture the owners to discover their wealth, and they put them to death when they have none to discover; they violate females of all ages; they insult the hoary head, and trample on all the decencies of life.—This is no exaggerated picture; whoever has read the account of the proceedings of the French in Swabia, in Holland, in Italy, in Switzerland, knows that it is not.—And can there be men in Great Britain, of so base a temper, so maddened by malignity, so cankered by envy, so besotted by folly, so stupified as to their own safety, as to abet the designs of such an enemy? It is said there are such men; but I have too firm a confidence in the general good sense of the People of Great Britain to believe, that such men are either many in number, or respectable for character, or formidable for connection. The men of this principality, at least, have nobly shewn, in a late instance, that they inherit the spirit of their ancestors, and have too ardent a love for their country to submit to a foreign yoke, under whatever specious promises of supporting the Rights of Men, of introducing Liberty and Equality, the invaders may attempt to deceive them.

What are these Rights of Men, this Liberty, this Equality, of which every man hath heard so much, and of which

few have any proper conception?—Let us see what they are in France itself.—There no man has any Right in his person, or in his property; both are absolutely at the disposal of the few persons who have usurped the Government.—There no man has any Liberty, except in the Liberty of submitting to the worst of Slavery; for what slavery can be worse than that of being subject to Laws which are perpetually changed, according to the caprice of the Ruling Faction?—*Ubi jus incertum, ibi jas nullum.*

Are the French coming hither to enrich the nation?—Will they pay attention to the poor of this country, when they have so many thousands of infinitely poorer persons in their own?—Will they reward their seditious adherents amongst us?—Yes, they will reward them, as all history informs us such Traitors ever have been rewarded—they will reward them with contempt, pillage, beggary, slavery, and death. The nation will be ruined by exorbitant impositions,—our Naval Power will be destroyed,—our Commerce transferred to France,—our Lands will be divided (not amongst those who wickedly covet their neighbours' goods) but amongst French Soldiers, who will be every where stationed, as the Roman Soldiers were of old, to awe the people and collect the taxes,—the flower of our youth will be compelled to serve in foreign countries, to promote the wicked projects of French ambition,—Great Britain will be made an appendage to continental Despotism.

I would say to the most violent Democrat in the kingdom,—Suppose the businets done: after Seas of Blood have been shed, Millions of Lives lost, Towns plundered, Villages burned, the Royal Family exterminated, and unutterable calamity has been endured by persons of all ranks;—after all this has been done, what Advantages will you have obtained beyond what you now possest? Will your Property be better protected? Will your personal Liberty be more respected? Will our Code of Jurisprudence be improved? Will our Laws be more impartially administered? Quite the contrary of all this now takes place in France. I do not say that when things are settled there, the present wretched condition of its inhabitants will be continued, and I hope it will not; but I am sincerely of opinion that few of us will live to see such a system established in France, as will procure to its inhabitants half the blessings which our ancestors have enjoyed, which we do enjoy, and which it is our interest to take care that our Posterity shall enjoy, under the Constitution of Great Britain.

* From "A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Llandaff, in June, 1793, by R. Watson, D.D. F.R.S. Bishop of Llandaff."

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